



News Release

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, September 12, 2006
Media Contact: MaryAnn Eads
Utah Council for Worksite Health Promotion
(801) 538-6256

Worksite Wellness Gets a Boost through UDOH/Regence Partnership

(Salt Lake City) –Utah businesses will soon get the chance to jump-start wellness programs with the help of funding and resources thanks to a new partnership between The Utah Council for Worksite Health Promotion (UCWHP), an entity supported by the Utah Department of Health, and Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah. The partnership will lead to increased opportunities for companies to get involved in Worksite Wellness.

“The new partnership allows us to increase participation in the UCWHP Annual Conference and Healthy Worksite Awards program, create a mini-grant program, and to improve the Web site to serve as a better resource for local companies,” said LaDene Larsen, director of the Bureau of Health Promotion, Utah Department of Health. “The goal of the partnership is to get as many companies involved in worksite wellness as possible.”

"We are pleased to provide additional resources to help Utah employees become healthier and more productive," said Scott Ideson, president of Regence. "At Regence, we offer a comprehensive program of tools and activities that reinforce our message of wellness and health care accountability. As a result, with the past several years, we have experienced savings related to medical cost trends, medical leaves of absence and workers compensation premiums, as well as improving overall employee satisfaction. Worksite wellness programs work, and we look forward to assisting other local companies as well."

The mini-grants, offered for the first time, are a significant aspect of the new partnership. By the end of 2006, seven mini-grants will provide a financial opportunity for selected established businesses to follow the lead of other companies who already have successful wellness programs in place.

-MORE-

USANA Health Sciences is one of these successful companies. They offer several wellness programs including their annual *Holiday Weigh-In Challenge*, which runs November 1st to January 1st during the tough holiday season of feasting. “Last season we competed against six other Utah companies in a weight loss challenge,” said Brad Pace, wellness coordinator and personal trainer, USANA. “Our employees lost a combined total of 537 pounds and 100 employees participated.” USANA has seen great benefits from their employee wellness programs, such as a reduction in health care costs and high employee retention and satisfaction.

Other companies have seen similar success. ARUP’s wellness efforts include a 10-week smoking cessation program for employees and their spouses. The program offers cessation classes, kits filled with goodies and ideas on how to quit, and opportunities to meet with physician assistants who can discuss options and prescribe medication where necessary. Successful participants are awarded \$100. Last year’s program helped 15 people quit smoking.

ARUP also has programs that encourage healthy eating, weight management, and exercise. “We try to listen to the needs of our staff and do everything that we can to meet those needs especially in the areas of health and wellness,” said Dr. Ronald Weiss, who is ARUP’s president and chief operating officer. “We believe that when we treat our employees well, they treat our customers with the same care and respect.”

Employers interested in promoting health at their worksites should consider attending the UCWHP Annual Conference that will be held October 3-4 in Sandy. Topics include creating a successful wellness program, setting up a worksite fitness facility, and managing your own health. Businesses can find information about the conference, mini-grant opportunities, and more at www.health.utah.gov/worksitewellness or by contacting MaryAnn Eads at meads@utah.gov or (801) 538-6256.

The Utah Council for Worksite Health Promotion is a non-profit group that consists of representatives from the Utah Department of Health and 14 other businesses/organizations interested in improving worksite wellness. The Council seeks to serve as a local connection for information about worksite wellness.